Statement under Article 19 of the PCT

Compared with claim 1 as filed, claim 1 further clarifies differences from Cited Document 1 (JP 10-220407 A) by making restrictions to the features that "a plug is arranged in threaded engagement with the valve main body such that an end portion of the first check valve and an end portion of the second check valve are covered by the plug, and a spring is arranged between at least one of the first check valve and second check valve and the plug such that the first check valve and the second check valve are biased in closing directions".

Cited Document 1 discloses that a communication passage can be made communicative or non-communicative without arrangement of any guide pipe by constructing a first check valve and a second check valve, which allow or prevent flows to a parallel passage and a tandem passage, respectively, slidable relative to each other, and also discloses a structure that the second check valve is slidably arranged in the first check valve.

The invention disclosed in Cited Document 1 and that of the subject application are different in the following four aspects:

(1) A "guide pipe" is needed in the construction of the cited document.
(2) The operating direction of the first check valve is opposite when it opens.
(3) A difference in the position of arrangement of the spring for biasing each check valve in its closing direction.
(4) A flow passage from the parallel passage to the communication passage.

Concerning the aspect (3) in particular, the invention of the subject application and that of Cited Document 1 are

different from each other in that the spring is arranged between the plug and at least one of the check valves in the invention of the subject application but is disposed between the first check valve and the second check valve in Cited Document 1. With respect to the aspect (4), on the other hand, they are different from each other in that pressure fluid flows out from the entire periphery of a seat portion for the first check valve in the invention of the subject application but flows out through an outer peripheral groove between the first check valve and the guide pipe in Cited Document 1.

The differences of the above-described aspects (1) to (4) are attributed to the fact that in the invention disclosed in Cited Document 1, the first check valve is arranged between the parallel passage and the communication passage and is opposite in direction of operation to the first check valve in the invention of the subject application. In the Amendment filed concurrently herewith, the following restrictions have been introduced:

(a) A "plug", which is recited in claim 3 presently on file, has been added to claim 1, and
(b) Between the plug and at least one of the check valves, a spring is arranged to bias the check valve in its closing direction.

Owing to these restrictions, the following feature has been clarified:

(c) The first check valve and the second check valve operate in the same direction.

As a result, the invention of the subject application can bring about advantageous effects such as:

(d) No guide pipe is needed for securing a seat portion for the check valve,
(e) It is not required to arrange the outer peripheral

groove as a passage for causing pressure fluid to flow to the communication passage upon opening the first check valve, and therefore, a pressure loss which would otherwise take place due to a restriction through the outer peripheral groove no longer occurs, and

(f) The invention of the subject application does not require the spring which is required between the first check valve and the second check valve in Cited Document 1 because these valves operate in opposite directions.

Claim 2 has restricted the features in the preamble and middle part of claim 3 as filed to clarify the relation between the first check valve and the second check valve.

Claim 3 has specified that in claim 2, a seat portion with which the first check valve is normally maintained in contact is arranged in the second check valve.

Claim 4 has specified that in claim 1, the second check valve is slidably arranged in the first check valve.

Claim 5 has specified that in claim 4, a spring is arranged between the plug and the first check valve to bias the first check valve in its closing direction, a spring is arranged between the plug and the second check valve to bias the second check valve in its closing direction, and a seat portion with which the first check valve is normally maintained in contact is arranged in the parallel passage.